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* **Interpretive:** Students will have the opportunity to discuss a democratic republic from multiple points of view. Specifically, the students will have the opportunity to view and discuss a dystopia, and will discuss its strong and weak points, and how those points can be improved. Furthermore, when beginning the discussion on the American Constitution and the different facets of American government, students will formulate an argument in agreement with, or in opposition to, the effectiveness of our government.
* **Emphasis on Narratives:** The students will be gathering Primary Sources concerning at least one branch of government, and from one government official. Hopefully, after the completion of the Scrapbook, the students will be able to send their letters to the President and receive a reply.
* **Not just about Politics:** The students will be including portions in their Scrapbook from the workers in local communities, and the services they provide (safety, recreation, education, etc.). The students will also discuss how the decisions of politicians affect the lives of everyday people.
* **Purposeful:** The purpose of the unit is to help the students develop a solid understanding of American government, and how they, as a student and a functioning member of society, can participate in that government. The activities are designed to encourage the students to work through the pros and cons of the ways the governments works on their own, and to give the students an understanding of checks-and-balances, laws, and a chain of command.
* **In-Depth Learning:** The students will move beyond simply memorizing the three branches of government and their uses. By creating a scrapbook and a letter to the President, students will investigate and research the powers of the branches of national government, and will explore how the decisions of those have an impact on state and local government. The students will also be able to enact a “Classroom Government” and will be able to act as a valid member of it.
* **Disciplined Inquiry:** The activities designed for this unit include limited-to-no worksheets, and require the students to “do” what is being taught in the lessons. These lessons will explore the essential questions outlined in the unit, will have a specific purpose that is clear to the students, and will take place in multiple and various group settings. The students will be further asked to consider the government from multiple points of view and with varying motives to encourage the understanding of controversy.
* **Teacher Scaffolding:** Because the lessons center on the students “doing,” the teacher is then free to move about the classroom and work with the students in a small group or individual basis. This will allow the higher-level students to explore deeper, and the lower-level students to get the support they might need.
* **Constructive Assessment**: Each cumulative project will have its own rubric that the students will devise with the teacher, and will be given a copy of the rubric to refer through throughout the projects. Because each portion of the project will have its own rubric, the students will be able to adjust and correct their work before continuing on.